

**SENATE JUDICIARY**

Exhibit No. 16

Date 2-2-07

Bill No. SB 255

January 31, 2007

Dear Chairman Laslovich and Senate Judiciary Committee members,

I am writing in regard to SB255 and want to express my firm opposition to this proposed Senate Bill.

I have been a proud and hard working employee of the State of Montana with the Department of Public Health and Human Services since 1999. During that time, I have been insured through the state health system as a "single" person, this was my only option until the fall of 2005.

When the State of Montana made domestic partner benefits available in the fall of 2005, my domestic partner and I happily got her enrolled through the state health insurance program. My paycheck is deducted every payday for her share of the benefits. She is self employed and was only able to have catastrophic coverage prior to being included in my benefit package with the state of Montana. She is now able to get health insurance, dental and eye care. We have both been grateful for the coverage, which we both pay for.

For the first time in sixteen years, I am afforded the same benefits as my heterosexual counterparts. If SB255 were passed, it would take away part of my benefit package. This would be a huge step backwards for the state of Montana. It's saying that my work is not as valued and my benefits aren't the same as the person in the next office, because of who I choose to love and make my life with.

Please vote "no" on SB255.

Sincerely,

Amy Gentry  
98 Lacota Dr.  
Missoula, MT 59803